CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	Waldbillig Log Hauling on State Land
Proposed Implementation Date:	November 2018
Proponent:	Mark Waldbillig
Location:	Sections 14 & 15, Township 4 South, Range 15 West
County:	Beaverhead County

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

Mark Waldbillig a logger from Florence Montana has applied to the MT DNRC, Dillon Unit for a Land Use License (LUL) to use an existing road in sections 14 & 15 T4S R15W in Beaverhead County to haul approximately 400 MBF of logs from private land to reach State Highway 278. The logging activity will occur on private lands to the north of the state land in the Big Hole Valley. Use of the road will be limited to dry or frozen conditions to reduce any road damage.

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED:

Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.

Jack Hirschy Livestock Inc. lessee
Patrick Rennie, DNRC Archeologist
MT Sage Grouse Conservation Program

2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:

Approval from the MT Sage Grouse Conservation Program

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Action Alternative: Grant proponent a Land Use License to haul approximately 400 MBF of logs over state land on an existing road in Sections 14 & 15, T4S R15W.

No Action Alternative: Deny proponent a Land Use License to haul approximately 400 MBF of logs over state land on an existing road in Sections 14 & 15, T4S R15W.

III. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- *RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.*
- *Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.*
- *Enter "NONE" If no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.*

4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE:

Consider the presence of fragile, compactable or unstable soils. Identify unusual geologic features. Specify any special reclamation considerations. Identify any cumulative impacts to soils.

The location of the existing haul road is located on Alluvial-fan deposits from the Holocene and Pleistocene eras. This alluvial fan contains silty sand and gravel deposits. This site is located directly off Montana Highway 278 approximately 10 miles south of Wisdom, Montatna.

The two-track road lies on soils that are Philipsburg silt loam and Libeg-Adel complex. According to the Natural Resources Conservation Service Web Soil Survey these soils have a slight erosion hazard potential, high restoration potential, and good traffic ability ratings.

The proponent would use the road during dry or frozen conditions. No long term or cumulative impacts to soils would be anticipated from use of the road for hauling logs.

5. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION:
Identify important surface or groundwater resources. Consider the potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality. Identify cumulative effects to water resources.

While on private land the haul road crosses Cow Cabin Creek a perennial stream. The road them traverses portions of state land in sections 14 & 15, T4S R15W well out of the creek bottom. As long as logging BMP's are maintained which would including rolling dips and proper drainage on the road no impacts to water quality are anticipated from use of the road to haul logs during dry and frozen conditions.

6. AIR QUALITY:
What pollutants or particulate would be produced? Identify air quality regulations or zones (e.g. Class I air shed) the project would influence. Identify cumulative effects to air quality.

A slight increase in airborne pollutants and particulates may occur from hauling activities on the road during the summer months. Short term impacts to air quality may occur however this is a rural area away from any population centers and it's not located in a Class I airshed. No long term or cumulative effects to air quality would be anticipated from hauling 100 loads of logs over this road.

7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY:
What changes would the action cause to vegetative communities? Consider rare plants or cover types that would be affected. Identify cumulative effects to vegetation.

The proposed haul road is located along the mountain foothills and valley grassland bottom, along with Montane sagebrush steppe.

Existing native species on the site include big sagebrush, Idaho fescue, bluebunch wheatgrass, green needlegrass, Sandberg bluegrass, prairie junegrass, lupine and western yarrow.

Use of the road will not destroy the native plant communities. The ground where the road is located has already been disturbed by lessee use of the road. The proponent would be responsible for monitoring and controlling weed populations during the life of the DNRC issued license and the lessee is responsible for controlling weeds on his lease.

Because it's the lessee's logs that will be hauled over the road he will be required to monitor and spray any weeds that occur on his state lease due to the hauling activity.

8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS:
Consider substantial habitat values and use of the area by wildlife, birds or fish. Identify cumulative effects to fish and wildlife.

A variety of big game, small mammals, reptiles, raptors, upland game birds and songbirds use this area and activities from the proposed project could temporarily disrupt wildlife movement and patterns. However, proposed activities are close to existing, open roads, and as such the area likely doesn't receive extensive use by many of the wildlife species more sensitive to human disturbance. A minor amount of grassland habitat would be removed with the proposed activities, but considerable amounts of these habitats would persist on the DNRC-managed parcel into the future. Big game winter range attributes would not be appreciably altered; no changes in thermal cover and minor changes in available forage for wintering big game would be anticipated.

9. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:
Consider any federally listed threatened or endangered species or habitat identified in the project area. Determine effects to wetlands. Consider Sensitive Species or Species of special concern. Identify cumulative effects to these species and their habitat.

A search was conducted using the Montana Natural Heritage Program database to identify point observations of species of concern in the section of the proposed activity. The following species of concern have been documented in the proposed use area: pygmy rabit (*Brachylagus idahoensis*), wolverine (*Gulo gulo*), Greater Sage-Grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*) and Arctic grayling (*Thymallus arcticus*). This site is located approximately 0.5 miles from two documented observations of pygmy rabbits in Sections 21 and 28. The site is approximately 1 mile from the Big Hole River where Arctic grayling and American White Pelicans have been documented.

The proposed haul route may have short term impacts on these species while hauling of logs is occurring. However, the impacts will be of a short duration and no long term or cumulative impacts would be anticipated from the implementation of the action alternative.

The proposed haul route is located within the Greater Sage-Grouse general habitat area boundaries defined by the Executive Order (EO) for the Implementation of the Montana Sage Grouse Conservation Strategy. This project is in the process of being evaluated by the Montana Sage Grouse Habitat Conservation Program. The proposal is outside of the 2-mile radius of an active sage grouse lek.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:
Identify and determine effects to historical, archaeological or paleontological resources.

A Class I (literature review) level review was conducted by the DNRC staff archaeologist for the area of potential effect (APE). This entailed inspection of project maps, DNRC's sites/site leads database, land use records, General Land Office Survey Plats, and control cards. The Class I search revealed that no cultural or paleontological resources have been identified in the APE. Because the area of potential effect on state land is an existing roadway, no additional archaeological investigative work will be conducted in response to this proposed request to haul logs across state land.

11. AESTHETICS:
Determine if the project is located on a prominent topographic feature, or may be visible from populated or scenic areas. What level of noise, light or visual change would be produced? Identify cumulative effects to aesthetics.

No changes to aesthetics will occur to the area from use of the existing road to haul logs over it.

12. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY:
Determine the amount of limited resources the project would require. Identify other activities nearby that the project would affect. Identify cumulative effects to environmental resources.

This proposal will create no additional demands on environmental resources of land, water, air or energy.

13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA:
List other studies, plans or projects on this tract. Determine cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of current private, state or federal actions in the analysis area, and from future proposed state actions in the analysis area that are under MEPA review (scoped) or permitting review by any state agency.

The Huntly Ranch is in the process of permitting an open cut gravel pit with the DNRC and DEQ in Section 16, T4S R15W. The project is under MEPA review.

IV. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION

- *RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.*
- *Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.*
- *Enter "NONE" If no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.*

14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:
Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.

Neither of the proposed alternatives would have any human health or safety concerns associated with them.

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:
Identify how the project would add to or alter these activities.

Neither of the proposed alternatives will affect industrial, commercial or agriculture activities and production in this area of the Big Hole Valley.

16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT:
Estimate the number of jobs the project would create, move or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to the employment market.

Neither of the proposed alternatives will affect quantity and distribution of employment.

17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES:
Estimate tax revenue the project would create or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to taxes and revenue.

Neither of the proposed alternatives will affect local and state tax base and tax revenues.

18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES:
Estimate increases in traffic and changes to traffic patterns. What changes would be needed to fire protection, police, schools, etc.? Identify cumulative effects of this and other projects on government services.

Neither of the proposed alternatives will affect demands for government services.

19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS:
List State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, and other zoning or management plans, and identify how they would affect this project.

Neither of the proposed alternatives will affect locally adopted environmental plans and goals.

20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES:
Identify any wilderness or recreational areas nearby or access routes through this tract. Determine the effects of the project on recreational potential within the tract. Identify cumulative effects to recreational and wilderness activities.

Neither of the proposed alternatives will affect access to and quality of recreational and wilderness activities in the area.

21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING:
Estimate population changes and additional housing the project would require. Identify cumulative effects to population and housing.

Neither of the proposed alternatives will affect density and distribution of population and housing in the Wisdom area.

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:
Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

Neither of the proposed alternatives will affect social structures and mores of the Big Hole Valley.

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:
How would the action affect any unique quality of the area?

Neither of the proposed alternatives will affect cultural uniqueness and diversity of the surrounding area.

24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:
Estimate the return to the trust. Include appropriate economic analysis. Identify potential future uses for the analysis area other than existing management. Identify cumulative economic and social effects likely to occur as a result of the proposed action.

Action Alternative: The action alternative will generate $1,200 for the common Schools Trust for use of the logging road to haul approximately 400 MBF of logs over it.

No Action Alternative: Will not generate any money for common schools trust.

EA Checklist Prepared By:	**Name:**	Timothy Egan	**Date:**	11/9/2018
	Title:	Dillon Unit Manager		

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

Action Alternative: Grant proponent a Land Use License to haul approximately 400 MBF of logs over state land on an existing road in Sections 14 & 15, T4S R15W.

No Action Alternative: This alternative would not generate any revenue for the common schools trust.

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

	EIS		More Detailed EA	X	No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	**Name:** MARTIN BALUKAS **Title:** TRUST LAND PROGRAM MANAGER
Signature:	**Date:** 11/11/18

Mark Waldbillig Log Hauling Land Use License
Sections 14 & 15 T4S R15W